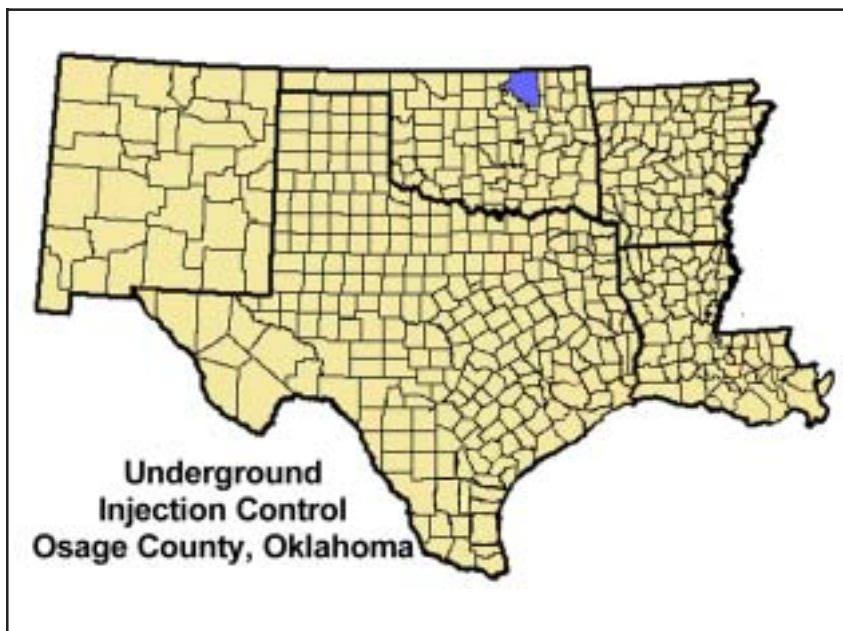


The Safe Drinking Water Act, Section 1422, requires the EPA to develop UIC regulations and allows the EPA to delegate enforcement of those requirements to States.

Responsible for assuring that UIC program implementation is accomplished in Region 6 according to the approved program and EPA guidances. The RA has delegated authority to the Water Quality Protection Division Director to approve UIC permits in Indian Country and approve exemptions to the land disposal restrictions. Authority to inspect and enforce in Indian Country has been delegated to the Compliance Assurance and Enforcement Division Director.



Contacts

Jerry R. Saunders, R6
214-665-6470
Philip Dellinger, R6
214-665-8324
Susan Johnson, HQ
202-564-8329

Discussion: States have primary authority for enforcement of UIC regulations, and EPA must assure that each State regulatory agency enforces those regulations in a manner consistent with the Safe Drinking Water Act. To accomplish this, EPA Region 6 reviews quarterly reports submitted by the States and participates in annual evaluations of State UIC program implementation. If EPA determines that State actions are ineffective or inconsistent with EPA requirements, the EPA could take independent enforcement action. Generally, State actions are appropriate, and EPA enforcement action is rarely required.

EPA Region 6 directly implements the UIC program in Indian Country except for injection wells associated with oil and gas production on the lands of the five Civilized Tribes in Oklahoma which are under the jurisdiction of the Oklahoma Corporation Commission. EPA regulates approximately 2600 injection wells located on lands of 17 Indian Tribes (15 in Oklahoma and 2 in New Mexico). All except 120 wells are located on the Osage mineral reserve, Osage County, Oklahoma.

Discussion continues: The EPA and Osage Nation work together to regulate injection wells on the Osage mineral reserve. A field office on the Osage Agency Campus is staffed by two EPA engineers who conduct inspections, complete initial reviews of permit applications and provide a local contact to assist injection well operators in complying with UIC regulations. The Osage Nation assists the EPA by inspecting and testing injection wells, maintaining well files, and receiving and completing preliminary processing of permit applications. The EPA Water Quality Management Division provides an annual grant to the Tribe to provide this support. This cooperative arrangement is unique in the entire country.

Interested Parties:

State environmental agencies, environmental groups, the general public, Tribes with injection wells on their lands, especially Osage Tribal Council and operators of oil leases in Indian Country.

Timelines:

Quarterly - EPA Region 6 reviews State agencies' quarterly reports on a quarterly basis.

Annually - EPA participates in the annual evaluations of program implementation and reviews annual reports submitted by operators in Indian Country.

Budget:

The EPA provides an annual grant to the State and Tribal agencies to assist in program implementation. Funding for each state depends on the number of injection wells, land area, and population. Total funding for Region 6 State UIC programs in FY2000 was about \$2.5 million.

